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Conflict Resolution Skills for Elementary Teachers

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS
FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this project was to develop a conflict resolution resource for teachers to use with elementary school children. To accomplish this purpose, current research and literature related to classroom conflict, conflict resolution skills and school violence issues were reviewed. The research demonstrated that students who are taught to deal with conflict at an early age are more inclined to be peaceable problem solvers as they go through school. The goals of this project are to provide teachers with lesson plans that can integrate conflict resolution skills and concepts into their curriculum in the hope that they would prevent or decrease acts of violence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Background of the Project	1
Introduction	1
Purpose of the Project	1
Significance of the Project	2
Limitations of the Project	4
Summary	5
Definition of Terms	6
Chapter Two: Review of Literature	9
What is Violence?	9
Causes of Violence	11
Ways to Eliminate and Prevent School Violence	13
Peer Mediation	18
Summary	24
Chapter Three: Procedures	25
Chapter Four: The Project	1
Lesson One: What is Conflict?	6
Lesson Two: The Conflict Escalator	8
Lesson Three: Solving Conflicts	11
Lesson Four: Solving Problems	14
Lesson Five: Understanding Other Perspectives	16
Lesson Six: Conflict and Feelings	18

Lesson Seven:	Conflict and Feelings	20
Lesson Eight:	Appreciating Diversity	22
Lesson Nine:	Caring, Respecting, and Community	24
Lesson Ten:	Caring, Respecting, and Community	25
Lesson Eleven:	Key To My Feelings	26
Lesson Twelve:	Steamed Teapot	28
Lesson Thirteen:	Smart Signals	30
Lesson Fourteen:	I'm a Hit at Managing My Anger!	32
Lesson Fifteen:	Shake My Anger	34
Lesson Sixteen:	We're Hot Stuff at Cooling Down	36
Lesson Seventeen:	Potattle Chips	38
Lesson Eighteen:	Pick a Pasta	40
Lesson Nineteen:	Lets Take a Look	42
Lesson Twenty:	Pizza With Pizazz	44
Lesson Twenty-one:	Twisted Times	46
Lesson Twenty-two:	A Rainbow of Peace	48
Lesson Twenty-three:	Mediation Means Magnificent!	50
Chapter Five:	Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations	28
	Summary	28
	Conclusions.	28
	Recommendations	29
References		33

Chapter One

Background of the Project

Introduction

Violence; it is the act of purposefully hurting someone, and it's a major issue facing today's society including children and young adults. Violence is a learned behavior, and like all learned behaviors it can be changed (American Psychological Association & Music Television, 1999). As an educator it is one's job to teach social responsibility so that young children have opportunities to become self-managers, and get the social, emotional, and ethical exposure needed to assist in positive child development. Hopefully a curriculum focusing on these skills will lead to a reduction in school violence.

Purpose of the Project

Conflict is a natural part of school climate but can lead to violence for those who do not have the skills needed to resolve a conflict peaceably. Therefore every school should teach conflict resolution as part of their violence prevention program. The purpose of this project was to develop a supplemental curriculum to enhance any existing school's violence prevention program. The curriculum is intended to enhance the social skills of students through use of techniques children can use in order to resolve conflicts in a peaceable manner before they escalate into violence.

Educators and students share the responsibility of creating a school community where everyone can feel safe, is valued, and can learn. By modeling and teaching ideas and ideals of conflict resolution to students, the reduction of school violence and the

creation of peaceable school classrooms will be seen and heard. This project offers ideas and lessons using various methods for educators to teach children to resolve conflicts with others in a non-threatening way. The materials and lessons in this project are designed to provide a background on varying strategies that educators can use to help promote conflict resolution within the classroom. The curriculum will help teachers promote non-violent strategies in their classrooms.

It is vital that educators begin teaching children at an early age about ways they can manage and resolve conflicts in a peaceable manner. If schools start teaching these positive tactics to children now and commit to a violence prevention program, as children get older they will be more prone to resolve their conflicts without violence.

Conflict resolution is a way for students to resolve a problem with another person or persons by using methods such as communication, negotiation, arbitration, mediation, and consensus building. The best possible way to educate children on how to be peaceable problem solvers is implementing conflict resolution methods and activities, making these a valid part of any school's curriculum. This project is intended to assist educators in doing this.

Significance of the Project

This project is important because violence within a school setting is increasing. Conflict leading to violence is a major issue facing today's youth. One in 12 high school students is threatened or injured with a weapon each year (American Psychological Association & Music Television, 1999). Persons between the ages of 12 and 24 face the highest risk of being the victim of violence (American Psychological Association & Music Television, 1999). Statistics show that by the early 1990s the incidence of

violence caused by young people reached unparalleled levels in American society (Berman, 1999). However, research shows that America's schools are among the safest places to be on a day-to-day basis. This is due to the strong commitment of educators, parents, and communities (Reno, 1999).

Conflict is a natural and normal part of classroom life. Conflict is seen on a daily basis inside the classroom. It is appropriate for schools to take a look at ways in which children can begin to resolve conflicts in a peaceable manner before it escalates into harmful acts of violence towards oneself or others (American Psychological Association & Music Television, 1999[APA & MTV]). It is important educators start with young children so they can mold and shape their minds early, reducing acts of violence now and in the future. Education is universal; therefore, schools have a great opportunity to play a vital role in decreasing acts of violent behavior in children at an early age when conflict arises.

Violence in schools is increasing, especially as children get older; therefore it is important for schools and educators at the elementary level to begin implementing conflict resolution early. According to Reno (1999) more and more acts of violence are reported each year most being from young males who are in either middle or high school. Research shows that if schools would implement peaceable problem solving strategies early in a child's education, children would learn to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner, and would then practice such peace-making strategies throughout their daily lives (Elderman, 1996).

According to Johnson and Johnson (1995) young children need to be exposed to schools that promote safe and violence-free strategies to solving problems, allowing the

school climate to be nurturing and non-threatening. Children at a young age are exposed to numerous mishaps; violence in schools is one of them. Although statistics show violence in schools is increasing, violence at the elementary level, as suggested by Garofalo, Siegel, and Laub (1987) resulted mostly as minor disagreements, bullying, and horseplay that had gotten out of hand (Garofalo, Siegel, and Laub, 1987). At elementary level it is clear that children victimize each other but the victimizations are more bothersome than injurious (Garofalo, Siegel, and Laub, 1987).

Not only are children facing conflict in schools but they are also facing conflict in society. Now more than ever, children are exposed to the changing patterns of family and community life. Children have become latch key kids, isolated more from parents. Many children today go unsupervised and take in television and the streets. Society has redefined violence as normal and acceptable due to mass media (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

We as educators now have the responsibility of educating parents and youth about other ways the media fails to acknowledge handling conflict. All of these reasons help support why elementary schools need to begin implementing peace making strategies and hold teachers, parents and students accountable for making sure that effort on everyone's part is being practiced consistently.

Limitations of the Project

The material for this project was developed for an elementary school, encompassing grades 1-5. The lessons included are targeted toward elementary-aged children. Although modification is applicable, this project will mainly benefit elementary teachers who want to help children learn peaceable problem solving strategies.

Conflict resolution curriculum comes with a multitude of strategies for decreasing violence, however minimal suggestions and activities are touched on briefly in this project. The lessons will help guide teachers in the right direction and serve as a springboard to what teachers are already doing to help conquer violence in the classroom.

Only a small portion of these lessons have been implemented with students by the author. It is not the intent of this project to provide a formal assessment of the implementation of the curriculum. Other curriculum components that correlate such as hate crimes, gang violence, gun violence, violence on oneself, and suicidal tendencies are not included as these tend to be more prevalent with older adolescents.

Summary

Education is universal and so is conflict. It makes sense that if we want to teach young learners how to avoid and handle violent situations the best way to get through to them is through the educational system. Knowing the violence in schools is increasing gives educators the perfect opportunity to make a difference and enlighten young people about the ways they can make a difference by using non-threatening acts of communication.

Throughout the rest of this project the reader will gain a better understanding of how conflict can easily lead to violence, and how educators can play a vital role in decreasing violence in young people. Chapter Two is a review of literature about violence, what violence is, causes of violence, ways to eliminate and prevent school violence, as well as some violence prevention programs that are being used by schools and educators today.

Chapter Three will detail necessary procedures used in order to write the project as well as what resources were needed, what library strategies were used, and more specifics such as what topics were addressed in order to retrieve helpful information to write the project. Chapter Three will also reveal to the reader how the project originated and was developed. Also, results that were found from this project are covered in chapter three.

Chapter Four will give the reader specific ideas on ways to enhance conflict resolution strategies within the classroom by age appropriate lessons intended for teachers to use with students. Also found in Chapter Four will be a resource guide for elementary school teachers to use as a reference for other ideas and programs pertaining to conflict resolution strategies.

Chapter Five summarizes this curriculum project and makes recommendations for further consideration. Chapter Five explains to the reader various conflict resolution approaches that are appropriate for different situations. Chapter Five also tells the reader individual lessons used by the author, and what the outcomes were.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this project the terms and definitions are stated below:

Aggression: Forceful action or attack (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Arbitration: Intervention into a dispute by an independent third party who is given authority to collect information, listen to both sides, and make a decision as to how the conflict should be settled (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Conflict: An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other

party in achieving their goals; a controversy or disagreement; to come into opposition (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Conflict Escalator: Helps children to understand how and why conflicts get worse. Tool used to help children record their behavior, and learn why their conflict escalated (Kreidler, 1994).

Conflict Resolution: A spectrum of processes that utilize communication skills and creative thinking to develop voluntary solutions that are acceptable to those concerned in a dispute. Conflict resolution processes include negotiation (between two parties), mediation (involving a third-party process guide) and consensus building (facilitated group decision-making) (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Facilitator: A third party or parties who provide procedural assistance to a group attempting to reach consensus about a problem (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Mediation: Intervention in a dispute by an impartial third party who can help the disputants negotiate an acceptable settlement (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Mediator: An invited intervener whose expertise and experience in conflict resolution techniques and processes is used to help disputants reach a satisfactory solution. The mediator is a process guide whose presence is acceptable to both disputants; he or she has no decision-making power to determine a settlement (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Negotiation: A relationship between two or more parties who have an actual or perceived conflict of interest. In a negotiation, the participants join voluntarily in a dialogue to educate one another about their needs and interests, exchange

information, and create a solution that meets the needs of both sides (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Resolution: A course of action agreed upon to solve a problem (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Violence: The unjust or abusive use of power; force exerted for the purpose of injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property (Girard & Koch, 1996).

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This review of literature addresses the topic of violence in schools. Violence is a major issue facing today's youth. At the same time, research shows schools are among the safest places to be on a day-to-day basis due to the commitment of educators, parents, and communities (Reno, 1999). This review of literature will address three categories: 1) definition of violence; 2) causes of violence in children; and 3) ways to eliminate and prevent school violence.

What is Violence?

Violence. It is the act of purposefully hurting someone (APA & MTV, 1999). Violence is a learned behavior, and like all learned behaviors can be changed. People who act violently have trouble controlling their feelings. They may have been hurt by others or think that making people fear them through violence or threats of violence will solve their problems or earn them respect.

According to Kopka (1997) violence is a serious problem that must be addressed in schools. A violent act could include verbal, visual, physical acts intended to demean, harm, or infringe upon another's civil rights. According to Johnson & Johnson (1995) violence includes physical and verbal aggression, incivility, drug abuse, robbery, assault, and murder. Violence is more of a concern today because the number of violent incidences in schools is increasing (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Goldstein (1984) states that "School violence stems from the prevalence of violence in society. America's

schools appear to parallel and reflect the levels, forms, and causes of aggression in our society at large” (p. 5).

According to Goldstein (1984) American public education had infrequent and low occurrences with school violence before the twentieth century. Violence preceding the twentieth century could be termed as quaint in character. “Misbehavior,” “poor comportment,” “bad conduct” like of getting out of one’s seat, insubordination, throwing a spitball are mild in comparison to the violence seen in today’s youth at school. Violence has gotten to the point where words and fists have escalated to aggravated assault with lethal weapons.

Bullying is another form of violence that surrounds the school environment. According to Besag (1989) bullying is an act of violence where an attack is carried out by one individual against another, one individual against a group, one group against another group, or one group against an individual. Bullying is an act of violence because it involves an aggressive act, one that can be verbal, physical or psychological in nature.

According to Flannery (1999), violent behavior needs to be considered along a continuum of behavior, because what is considered violent for a first grader may be different from what is considered for a twelfth grader. With young elementary school children violence is manifested by aggressive behavior such as kicking, hitting, spitting or name-calling. A child who engages in these kinds of behaviors typically does not get along with other children and does not do well in school, behaviorally or academically. These “early starter” children are also at high risk for engaging in aggressive and violent behavior in adolescence and young adulthood.

Violence can take on other meanings as children get older. According to Flannery (1999) violence can become more serious as children increase in age and grade. For example, bullying, extortion, and physical fighting are seen more commonly as children get older. School violence in older students can also include vandalism, property offenses, theft, or serious conflict between staff and students.

Causes of Violence

There are many theories about what triggers the complex human behavior called violence, and the research is ongoing. Some feel that the potential for violent behavior is inherent in the chemical makeup of the human body. Some feel that violent behavior is learned from family members, neighborhood environment, and peer groups. And some declare that violent behavior is the result of negative social forces such as poverty and lack of economic opportunity (Kopka, 1997).

In reality, violence is most likely the result of a complex linkage of many risk factors. No risk factor is mutually exclusive; each has the potential to contribute to violent behavior. Physicians, scientists, researchers, educators, sociologists, and social reformers have identified some key probable risk factors in youth violence: certain physiological elements, certain socioeconomic elements, the availability of handguns, membership in a gang, drug and alcohol use, and violence in the media (Kopka, 1997).

What causes someone to punch, kick, stab or fire a gun at someone else or even him/herself? There is never a simple answer to that question. But people often commit violence because they have trouble being in control of themselves, which leads to poor

decision-making. The more these factors are present in one's life, the more likely one is able to commit an act of violence (APA & MTV, 1999).

Violence is a powerful tactic to show expression. Some people use violence to release feelings of anger or frustration. They feel as though there are no answers to their problems and feel compelled to turn to violent behavior as a way of expressing one's out of control emotions. Manipulation is another characteristic of violent behavior. Violence is used as a way to control others or get something they want. Violence is used to retaliate against those who have hurt them or someone they care about (APA & MTV, 1999).

APA & MTV (1999) also includes factors congruent to Kopka (1997) that contribute to violent behavior:

- Peer pressure
- Need for attention or respect
- Feelings of low self-worth
- Early childhood abuse or neglect
- Witnessing violence at home, in the community or in the media
- Easy access to weapons

According to the Kevin Dwyer (1999) schools can have certain characteristics that can lead to student violence. Some schools tend to be safer than other schools. Several elements of the school culture and climate play crucial roles to help increase or decrease a school's tendency to be safe. Violence and antisocial behavior are more likely to occur in schools that have the following risk factors:

- Overcrowding

- Poor design and use of school space
- Lack of firm, yet caring, disciplinary procedures
- Student alienation
- Multicultural insensitivity
- Teacher and peer rejection of at-risk students
- Student resentment toward school routines

According to Walker (1999), co-director of the Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, schools that have a negative climate and atmosphere are more susceptible to violence. Walker also claims that unclear and low expectations from students and lack of student cohesion in a school building cause violence to occur. Low levels of student participation and parent involvement, and few opportunities to gain skills and develop socially add to violence and antisocial behavior in school as well (Walker, 1999). According to Catalano (1995), school violence is caused by children who show signs of early and persistent antisocial behavior. Catalano also sees academic failure and lack of commitment to school as valid reasons why children become violent.

Ways to Eliminate and Prevent School Violence

This section addresses various methods educators can implement to help strengthen any violence prevention program within a school setting. This section will focus on ways teachers can best model and advocate for peaceful classrooms. In this section the reader will find ideas that encourage children to be in control of situations using non-threatening methods of problem solving such as peer mediation and arbitration. Also, suggestions on violence prevention programs that work well now in schools will be

covered. This section will address prominent areas of conflict resolution that can help alleviate acts of violence among youth.

More than 750 violence prevention programs are being implemented across America's schools today (Kopka, 1997). If one is exploring the causes and prevention of violence, three organizations which provide up-to-date research include: (1) the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, (2) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and (3) the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

Many violence prevention programs serve as educational resources for violence prevention and conflict resolution curricula. For example, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, the Educators Dispute Center, the National Association for Mediation in Education, the National Institute for Dispute Resolution, and the National School Safety Center are all educational resources schools can implement into their curricula as part of a school-wide violence prevention program.

Professional educators can also contact the American Federation of Teachers, Educators for Social Responsibility, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Education Association of the United States, as well as the National School Boards Association. All of these organizations have established reputations that provide schools and educators with non-violent ways of keeping schools safe (Kopka, 1997).

For example, the American Federation of Teachers represents 900,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, school-related personnel, public and municipal employees, higher education faculty and staff, and nurses and other health professionals. It advocates

national standards for education, the professionalism of teaching, and disciplined and safe environments of learning (Kopka, 1997).

The AFT has actively promoted safe schools practices over the years. The AFT is responsible for the “Zero Tolerance” policy for drugs, weapons, and disruptive behavior in and around schools. The AFT is responsible for the national campaign called “Responsibility, Respect, Results: Lessons for Life.” It has a strong antiviolence component and promotes higher academic and discipline standards (Kopka, 1997).

Another previously mentioned organization is the Education Development Center, which is a nonprofit organization that has worked in injury prevention and control since 1975 and in violence prevention since 1986. Its goal is to make a major contribution to the reduction of violence across the life cycle. It is responsible for “The Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents” which is used nationwide in more than 5000 programs including schools (Kopka, 1997).

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) provides resources and services for educators and parents, including books; curricula; and workshops and training on violence prevention, conflict resolution, intergroup relations, and character education. National Association for Mediation in Education is congruent to ESR. The National Association for Mediation in Education promotes the development, implementation, and institutionalization of school conflict resolution programs and curricula. It currently serves as the primary national and international clearinghouse of information, resources, technical assistance, and training in the field of conflict resolution in education. It also provides models for conflict resolution in the classroom (Kopka, 1997).

Attempts to resolve conflict using fists, loud voices, verbal put-downs or weapons are not appropriate in school and are often counterproductive (Girard & Koch, 1996). Children must be taught there are more appropriate alternatives for resolving conflict. Unfortunately, many parents do not model peaceful means of conflict resolution. It is up to educators to teach children methods of constructive conflict (Girard & Koch, 1996).

According to Girard and Koch (1996) conflict can be a force for personal growth and change if handled appropriately. Johnson and Johnson (1995) believe schools will be safer learning environments if conflicts are encouraged to be solved in peaceable non-threatening ways.

Deborah Prothrow-Stith asserts that the following elements are essential in an ideal, system-wide school violence prevention program:

- Teaching social skills
- A peer-mentoring program
- Conflict resolution programs
- After-school activities
- Parenting courses (for adults and teens)
- Early intervention programs for Head Start children and victims and witnesses of violence
- Dating-violence intervention programs
- Extended school hours to offer a community safe haven
- Gang prevention and drug prevention programs
- Mentoring and job-training programs
- Peer leadership and peer mediation programs.

According to Girard and Koch (1996) conflict resolution programs in schools are implemented to teach better problem-solving strategies and decision-making skills. These are life long skills that enhance interpersonal relationships, provide the necessary tools for building a climate within a school that is more cooperative and conducive to learning, and offer a framework for handling differences in ways that lead to improved communication, greater understanding, and less fear.

Conflict resolution programs strengthen students' self esteem, aid in improving communication and analytical skills, help children learn to appreciate diversity, and lessen disciplinary problems (Girard & Koch, 1996). According to Girard & Koch (1996) schools as a whole benefit as conflict resolution programs support staff and parents' abilities and willingness to cooperate and solve students' problems.

Research on conflict resolution programs in the schools does suggest that they have helped decrease violence and fighting (Girard & Koch, 1996). Reduction of name-calling and putdowns and decreases in the number of suspensions is also accounted for due to conflict resolutions programs in schools. Conflict resolution programs increase the self-esteem and self-respect of peer mediators, enable staff to deal more effectively with conflicts, and improve the school climate (Girard & Koch, 1996).

According to Johnson and Johnson (1995) training students in conflict resolution not only helps schools become more orderly and peaceful but also improves instruction. Positive conflict in the classroom can gain and hold student's attention, can increase their motivation to learn, can arouse their intellectual curiosity, and can improve the quality and creativity of problem solving.

Girard and Koch (1996) firmly believe that all schools should have a system in place for resolving conflicts. Girard and Koch (1996) see conflict resolution helping to eliminate school violence due to the following:

1. The process brings conflicting students or staff together in a neutral setting.
2. It resolves conflict through open communication.
3. It teaches cooperative decision-making.
4. It ensures consistency and fairness.
5. It makes students responsible for their own actions.
6. It directly teaches negotiation skills and higher level thinking skills.
7. It brings closure to a problem, so individuals do not hold grudges.
8. It opens lines of communication.
9. It ensures the respectful treatment of students.
10. Unlike suspensions and detentions, which remove students from a situation allowing them to escape a problem, conflict resolution shapes appropriate behavior by teaching students to face problems and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Peer Mediation

A significant number of peer mediation systems have been established in schools across the United States. The concept of children helping other children is an important component to resolving a conflict before violence erupts. Lane and McWhirter (1993) found that peer leaders had greater credibility than school staff in social interactions among students. According to Lane and McWhirter (1993) students in peer mediation programs tend to feel more committed to the intervention's goals and tend to be more interested in producing change among their peers.

The most fundamental benefit of peer mediation is that it effectively resolves student conflicts. Close to 90 percent of all mediation sessions result in an agreement that satisfies not only the parties, but teachers, administrators, and parents as well (Cohen, 1995). When students choose to end a conflict in mediation, it is resolved for good. This is because mediators encourage their peers to discuss all issues in dispute, not only the precipitating incidents. Even in cases where written agreements do not result, parties often learn enough about the situation to defuse their conflict (Cohen, 1995).

Peer mediation teaches students essential life skills (APA & MTV, 1999). Just as reading and writing are essential skills for leading a productive life, so too are conflict resolution skills. Young people need to be able to communicate effectively, appreciate the consequences of their actions, and generate and evaluate alternative solutions to problems (APA & MTV, 1994).

Peer mediation teaches these fundamental skills and attitudes to both mediators and parties. Peer mediation also enables students to develop their conflict resolution skills where it matters most: on real-life conflicts often times happening in a school setting. Mediating conflicts at school also encourages students to do so outside of school such as at home with family (APA & MTV, 1994).

Peer mediation motivates students to talk things out rather than fight things out (Cohen, 1995). Students learn from friends who are mediators. This allows students to resolve their conflicts collaboratively. This also creates a sense of trust between students. Research done by Cohen showed that peer mediation deepens the educational impact of school. Peer mediation uses inter-personal conflict as a teaching tool.

While mediators model pro-social methods of resolving conflicts, students practice resolving their differences using criteria of fairness and mutual benefit rather than brute strength and intimidation (Cohen, 1995). Students that are having a problem resolving a conflict often turn to another student who is a peer mediator. This creates a sense of cohesiveness within a student body (Johnson and Johnson, 1995). Also, more trust, respect and appreciation towards one another is apparent.

Peer mediation teaches students the skills and then encourages them to resolve their own conflicts in a supervised setting. This gives the students a sense of ownership and the ability to resolve conflicts that might never have come to the attention of adults. Students need to realize that they are self-managers and they have all the capabilities of resolving matters in a responsible manner (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

Peer mediation increases a student's self-esteem. Tom Roderick (1993) found that "Self-esteem is increasingly regarded as essential to students' success, and peer mediation enhances self-esteem in a variety of ways" (p. 3). Roderick (1993) goes on to state,

Mediators experience their ability to make a profound difference in the lives of others, and their contribution is valued by adults and students alike. Parties participate in a process that enables them to take charge of their lives and leaves them feeling successful rather than diminished. When a mediation session is successful, every person involved feels like they have done an honorable thing.

(p.4)

Students gain many important insights from their involvement with peer mediation. Most significantly students learn that their conflicts are simply a result of

misunderstanding or differing needs. This shows students that there are ways to work through these misunderstandings. It helps students realize that situations they thought were highly complex, really are simple matters that can be worked out through discussion and resolution (Roderick, 1993).

According to Lanteiri (1999) peer mediation also helps students appreciate diversity. Students of different races, classes, ages and religions communicate and work together to resolve important problems simply through mediation. Lanteiri states, "Teachers need to implement lessons into their curriculum that touch on diversity, because it would help alleviate a lot of the prejudices students have about one another, hence it would help decrease the acts of violence" (p. 2). One example includes the shooting at Columbine High School in Denver, Colorado (1998). The targeted victims were athletes and Christians. They were targeted simply because of the group they were associated with. The most recent includes the shootings at Santana High School near San Diego, California (2001). The boy resorted to retaliating with a gun because he was bullied at school. Lanteiri would agree that it would be very helpful to teach diversity to young children so that they may continue to grow up and appreciate all people for their differences.

Teachers need to hold students accountable and continue to have high expectations. Peer mediation expects the best from students. This is important because many students feel as if teachers and other adults assume that they are incapable of acting responsibly. Peer mediation provides an opportunity for young people to rise to their fullest potential (Cohen, 1995). Peer mediation involves critical and creative thinking. It involves analyzing, and reflection, all of which pertain to higher order thinking skills.

Most schools today expect teachers to provide lessons that involve students thinking on higher levels, and having a peer mediation program to help resolve conflicts would be beneficial to any school's curriculum. Also, mediation challenges students to be the best that they can be, and they respond to the challenge in a positive manner (Cohen, 1995).

Another reason peer mediation needs to be used to help solve conflicts between students is because peer mediation engages *all* students. Peer mediation can touch and help any student who needs a conflict resolved. For example, Lantieri (1999) suggests how peer mediation benefits 'at-risk' students. She states, "Becoming a mediator gives "at-risk" students more than important life skills. It gives them a badly needed way to contribute to their school" (p. 5).

Students that have chronic behavior problems come to appreciate mediation. For example, students that have behavior problems turn to peers for mediation. There is a comfort level between peers, so it becomes a win-win situation for all involved. The results are students settling disputes non-violently (Higgins, 1990).

Another reason why schools should implement a peer mediation program is because it creates more time for learning. Research shows that the decrease in suspension rates are more likely when implementation of a peer mediation program is in place (Cohen, 1995). This allows students to spend more time in class, and they are less distracted. With students resolving their conflicts in mediation, teachers spend less of their valuable time disciplining students and more of it teaching them (Cohen, 1995).

Because conflict is a normal part of classroom life, teachers need to be aware of the lasting effects peer mediation can have on students. Peer mediation also works in numerous ways to effectively prevent violent conflict. Even after a conflict has erupted,

mediation can prevent it from leading to more or greater conflicts. Peer mediation programs also have a positive effect on factors that contribute to problems like substance abuse, teen pregnancy, low self-esteem, lack of decision-making skills, and negative peer pressure (Cohen, 1995).

Peer mediation has a positive impact on school climate. Students that are involved in peer mediation programs, help give feelings of belonging. More ownership is prevalent, and students feel as though they are in control of their behavior, actions, and school life. This helps decrease tension amongst peers, and gives more of a sense of belonging and acceptance to a “school’s climate.” It improves communication among students and between students, teachers, administrators, and parents. According to Higgens (1990) it preserves old friendships and begins new ones when former adversaries become friends. According to Cohen (1995) peer mediation helps create a stronger sense of unity and respect for one another. This allows everyone to feel safer, and have a positive attitude about being at school.

Peer mediation integrated into a school’s curriculum allows students to act like adults. Schools that promote peer mediation allow students much opportunity at being mature individuals, and are believed to be problem solvers in a rational and respectable manner (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). Peer mediation is structured, yet allows students to make their own choices hence students are in control of their own destinies. By promoting such a program, self-confidence is highly evident (Katz & Lawyer).

Summary

There is no excuse for schools not to have appropriate alternatives for resolving conflicts peacefully. With so much research and 'real-life' examples of the positive impact such alternatives can make, every school in America should execute some type of violence prevention program. Whether it is to be an adopted curriculum, peer mediation programs, or conflict resolution components, schools will not see a change in decreasing violence until educators advocate and implement certain violence prevention programs in schools.

If schools would include a violence prevention program as part of their building's curriculum, one would start to see a decrease in violence and hateful acts in our Nation's schools. Children would become more aware of appreciating diversity, and be more receptive to varying degrees of beliefs and opinions. Children would be working towards unity, and pro-social behaviors for a better society. Schools would see more pride and leadership from their students, and communities would see more citizenship from students. Youth would be problem-solvers and would be setting examples for even younger students to follow through with. Classrooms would be more cohesive and classroom conflict would get solved in a peaceful method.

Information today indicates many positive and practical benefits of using peers to help alleviate conflicts in a peaceable manner. There are so many benefits when schools can implement various violence prevention methods for children to utilize. It is indeed a positive component to any school's curriculum.

Chapter Three

Procedures

The purpose of the project was to create a curriculum that provides valid information on reasons why students and therefore school climate benefit when conflict resolution is used to solve problems. This project also was developed so educators can teach children ways to solve conflicts in a peaceable manner rather than act out in violence. The third purpose of this project is for educators to be able to use this curriculum as a teaching tool because it has ideas and lessons on how to best teach conflict resolution to their students.

The project originated from experiences of the author, both as a teacher and a learner. The district in which the author teaches does not have an adopted conflict resolution curriculum. The author has taught in the past at other schools where violence prevention programs include conflict resolution strategies, and felt that her classroom and school in its entirety could benefit from curriculum that provides conflict resolution strategies for educators to teach to children.

Also, with violence being so prevalent in today's society, especially on school campuses, the author felt it was appropriate to not only become more knowledgeable in this area, but also to create a resource book that would assist any teacher in her or his building. Since conflict is a natural component to any classroom's environment, creating this curriculum for the author's school was appropriate.

A compilation of resources was used throughout this project. The author used the Central Washington University Library for literature from books and documents. Some of the key subject areas that were used include "conflict resolution", "violence in

schools”, “violence”, “violence prevention”, “classroom management” and “pro-social behavior”. The author also relied on the Internet for recent articles related to violence prevention programs in schools today. From the information found, the author was also able to obtain more literature through references sighted from her original pieces of literature and articles off the Internet.

The review of literature related to violence prevention programs and conflict resolution strategies were read, evaluated, and summarized. The results of this literature review indicated that schools implementing violence prevention programs get positive results. Schools that promote and model conflict resolution strategies for their students create a sense of ownership, responsibility, and student body cohesiveness.

The review of literature also indicated that teachers who used conflict resolution strategies and lessons in their classrooms showed significant drops in student violence. Results also indicated that children who were taught how to resolve conflicts in a non-threatening manner, felt more confident about themselves. Also, students took ownership in solving conflicts on their own. Students were safer, and learned positive self-management skills that would not only help them through school, but would be used as life-long skills.

Based upon the review of literature, specific lesson plans were developed that focus on teaching students specific concepts and skills. Each lesson plan addresses some aspect necessary in the reduction of conflict between individuals. Each lesson gives students the opportunity to solve conflict non-violently.

The notebook containing the curricula is organized into three sections and focuses on skills needed for success. These sections comprise the content of chapter IV of this

project. The first section contains the introduction and gives an overview of what the reader can expect next. Section one also addresses specific lessons and gives an overview of why violence prevention and conflict resolution go hand in hand, and are needed in an elementary school environment. It is important for the reader to understand and recognize the importance of teachers doing their part in the classroom to guide students in becoming responsible problem solvers. Also, section two addresses specific lessons for teachers to use in the classroom. Section three gives an annotated bibliography of other resources educators can use to enforce non-violent ways of communication and problem solving strategies with students in the classroom.

Chapter Four

The Project

The project is divided into two parts. Section one is the introduction. Section two includes lesson plans for teachers to use with students. These lessons promote ways children can resolve conflicts without violence.

In Chapter Two, the review of literature addressed the topic of violence in schools. Three categories congruent to this topic were presented: 1) definition of violence; 2) causes of violence in children and 3) ways to eliminate and prevent school violence. As educators, it is one's job to teach social responsibility so that young children have opportunities to become self-managers, and get the social, emotional, and ethical exposure needed to assist in positive child development.

The violence that occurs in our neighborhoods and communities has found its way inside the schoolhouse door. While we take some solace that schools are among the safest places for young people, we need to do more. School violence reflects a much broader problem, one that can only be addressed when everyone (school, home, and community) works together. This project can aid teachers with lessons on how to model peaceable classroom activities that reinforce to children suitable ways to handle conflict. Even though most schools are safe, no school is immune to violence and every school has conflict. It is up to educators to do their part by teaching young children how to resolve conflicts in non-threatening ways. Violence is a learned behavior so if schools can do their part by teaching young children ways to solve every day issues in a peaceable manner, children will be learning non-violent strategies to solve problems. Conflict is a natural part of classroom life, and children who are exposed to peaceable

problem solving will be more inclined to use these problem solving strategies versus threatening or violent acts towards others.

There is ample documentation that prevention and early intervention efforts can reduce violence and other troubling behaviors in schools (Kopka, 1997). Research suggests (Kopka, 1997) that some of the most promising prevention and intervention strategies involve the entire educational community, administrators, teachers, families, students, support staff, and community members working together to form positive relationships with all children. If schools and communities can recognize the threatening and unsafe behaviors early, children will be able to get the help they need before violent behavior escalates.

One of the best ways for educators to help do their part is by implementing conflict resolution lessons into their curriculum. This section will give ideas for elementary school teachers who are in need of activities to implement in their classrooms, or resources to look into for further knowledge and assistance.

The lessons in chapter four are intended to be springboards to enhance peacemaking social skills for young children. Each lesson can be easily adapted for all elementary grade levels appropriately, and can be integrated into thematic units of study. This curriculum is designed for teachers who need extra help or solutions with integrating peaceable problem solving strategies into their curriculum. It is also designed for other school and support staff, as well as community members, who are interested in finding more about ways to help teach young minds violence-free strategies for solving problems. Lessons 1-10 are in sequential order, meaning it is best to start with lesson one and work up to and through lesson ten as some of these lessons do build upon previously learned concepts and skills such as the conflict escalator. All other lessons can be taught as seen appropriate by the teacher.

The following resources were used in developing these lessons: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler, and Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities by Beth Teolis. Many ideas were taken directly from these resources. The author has made adaptations to each lesson presented and has put implementation needed to execute each lesson in her own words.

By using these lessons, students will have the knowledge and skills needed to be able to resolve conflicts on one's own peacefully. These lessons will promote a student's self-esteem, and encourage students to be self-managers. The following lessons will nourish student's behavior by allowing them to make smart choices and be in control of their decision making. Students will exercise responsibility and citizenship, show concern for others, and gain feelings of self-worth by resolving conflicts on one's own without violence.

Project Table of Contents

Individual Lesson Plans

Lesson One:	What is Conflict?	6
Lesson Two:	The Conflict Escalator	8
Lesson Three:	Solving Conflicts	11
Lesson Four:	Solving Problems	14
Lesson Five:	Understanding Other Perspectives	16
Lesson Six:	Conflict and Feelings	18
Lesson Seven:	Conflict and Feelings	20
Lesson Eight:	Appreciating Diversity	22
Lesson Nine:	Caring, Respecting, and Community	24
Lesson Ten:	Caring, Respecting, and Community	25
Lesson Eleven:	Key To My Feelings	26
Lesson Twelve:	Steamed Teapot	28
Lesson Thirteen:	Smart Signals	30
Lesson Fourteen:	I'm a Hit at Managing My Anger!	32
Lesson Fifteen:	Shake My Anger	34
Lesson Sixteen:	We're Hot Stuff at Cooling Down	36
Lesson Seventeen:	Potattle Chips	38
Lesson Eighteen:	Pick a Pasta	40
Lesson Nineteen:	Lets Take a Look	42
Lesson Twenty:	Pizza With Pizazz	44

Lesson Twenty-one: Twisted Times46

Lesson Twenty-two: A Rainbow of Peace48

Lesson Twenty-three: Mediation Means Magnificent!50

Lesson One: What is Conflict?

Objectives:

- ~ to define conflict
- ~ to broaden children's understanding of conflict beyond just a fight

Materials:

- ~ cardboard strip showing the word conflict (or teacher can write word on whiteboard)
- ~ blank paper for drawing, lined paper for writing
- ~ writing and coloring utensils (pencils, markers, crayons)

Procedure:

Display the cardboard strip, and read the word conflict aloud, and ask if anyone knows what it means. Build on students' responses by explaining that a conflict is a disagreement between people. Some questions the facilitator of the lesson may want to ask include: 1) What would be an example of a conflict?, 2) What kinds of conflicts have you been in?, 3) What do you think of when you hear the word conflict?, 4) What kinds of conflicts do grown-ups have?

Once a discussion as a whole group has been shared have students come up and either draw their perception of conflict, or the teacher may want to draw different conflicts for the students to talk about. Another adaptation would be for the teacher to already have pictures made of certain conflicts to show to the class. During discussion, encourage children to use words other than *fight* by modeling a range of conflict related vocabulary. As words are being discussed, be sure to write these words on the board. (eg: angry, mean, violent, bully, hurt, rude, disrespectful) Try to tie these words into the pictures that were either drawn or pre-made by the teacher. Ask questions such as: 1) What is happening?, 2) What do you think the conflict is

about?, 3) How do you think the people in the conflict feel right now? How do you know?,
4) What words would you use to describe this conflict?

Once the discussion has been generated about the word *conflict* and about certain pictures, have the children draw their own picture of a conflict they were involved in. Ask them to label the pictures. As a conclusion to this lesson, have the children share their conflict/picture with the rest of the class and talk about ways to solve each problem. As an extension, children can then write a story about their conflict that they drew, and now come up with a possible solution to their conflict that promotes a peaceable way to solve their conflict.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Two: The Conflict Escalator

Objectives:

- ~ to identify behaviors that make a conflict escalate
- ~ to introduce and use the conflict escalator

Materials:

- ~ scissors
- ~ crayons
- ~ glue
- ~ drawing paper

Procedure:

Draw a set of steps on the board, and ask the class what they think the drawing is.

Explain to the class that the drawing is an escalator which is a set of stairs moves up or down.

Ask students if they have any stairs in their home, this will help those who do make a connection to an escalator. Also, you can use examples of escalators at the mall to help students use their background knowledge on what an escalator is. Explain to the class that when conflicts get worse, we say that the people involved are on a conflict escalator.

Talk with the class about how a person could step on the escalator. Generate discussion about how when hurtful words are said, a person has taken a step on the escalator. Then talk to the class about what tends to happen next; the person who was hurt will say something back to escalate the conflict even more, so now they are at step two. And continue with how the conflict will escalate and the people involved keep moving up the escalator until potentially someone could get hurt very bad.

Have the class practice mapping out a conflict by either giving them a pre-made escalator, or have each make one individually from the example that is on the board. Read the following story to the class: While James was getting the basketball out of the sports equipment box before going out to recess, the plastic baseball bat accidentally fell over and clunked Rebecca on the head. "Ouch!" said Rebecca. "You should be careful, you big loser." James felt bad that the bat accidentally hit little Rebecca but he did not like being called a loser. It was an accident! "You don't have to be such a whiner," said James. Rebecca felt very hurt. As James started to walk towards the door to go out for recess, Rebecca took the plastic baseball bat and swatted the basketball out of James's hands. Ms. Chang, their teacher, came over to the sports equipment box area. "What is going on with you two?" she asked. James and Rebecca both pointed at each other. "He/she started it!" they both said.

Have the class write on the first step what was the first thing that happened in this conflict. Have them write a picture on or by the first step. Continue to have the class do this as you work through the entire conflict together, emphasizing how as you go up the steps the conflict is escalating or increasing, making things worse.

After you have the steps appropriately listed and illustrated, talk about other ways James and Rebecca could have solved their problem by not stepping on to the escalator. Make sure you are consistent with this concept by making an effort to incorporate it into daily life in the classroom. When children have conflict, ask, "How did you get yourself onto the Conflict Escalator? What sent you up the Conflict Escalator? How could you come down the Conflict Escalator? Also, encourage students to talk about the conflict by saying, "I think you and I are on the Conflict Escalator. How are we going to get off?" This will help children take control of their actions and work together with that other person(s) as a team to come up with solutions on

their own. By doing this, children need to feel proud that they were able to solve conflicts in a non-threatening way.

A useful follow-up is to always have a classroom Conflict Escalator up. Make a sign that says *Stay Off the Conflict Escalator. Try not to _____ this week!* In the blank space, tape a card with the behavior of the week. (Some examples of words may include: use hurtful words, raise your voice, touch others inappropriately, bully, name-call or tattle)

Lesson Three: Solving Conflicts

Objectives:

- ~ to identify common non-violent conflict resolution techniques

Materials:

- ~ chart paper
- ~ writing utensils
- ~ pre-made conflict resolution chart
- ~ white construction paper for drawings

Procedure:

Start by asking students to think of ways to solve conflicts peacefully. Be sure to record all ideas either on chart paper or board. Next, discuss the list, making sure that all the ideas are in deed peaceful and not going to hurt others. Bring out the pre-made conflict resolution chart and discuss each item on the list, comparing the chart to the list that the children came up with. You may want to do comparative reasoning by using a Venn diagram. List the students' responses on the left side and the conflict resolution chart responses on the right side, and together come up with what they both have in common and write those in the middle. Because this list is a lot of information, you may want to spread it out over several days.

Conflict Resolution Chart

Talk it out: Many conflicts can be solved by sitting down and talking about the problem.

Listen to Each Other: People in the conflict need to be willing to listen to each other. Good listening helps each person understand what the other is thinking and feeling.

Share: If people are having a conflict about who gets to use something, there may be a way to use the object at the same time.

Take Turns: One way to share is to decide that first one person uses it, and then the other person has a turn.

Compromise: If both people give in a little, they compromise

Make a peace offering: One person gives a little gift of something that shows he or she wants to solve the conflict.

Say “I’m Sorry”: Sorry can mean different things. One reason to say sorry is when you are wrong. It can also be a way of saying, “I feel bad we are having this conflict.”

Build Trust: Sometimes one person doesn’t believe what the other says. People need to trust each other.

Work Together: Sometimes a conflict can be solved by agreeing to work together on a project or idea.

Solve the Problem: Conflicts are problems. If the people solve the problem, then the conflict will be solved.

Put It Off: Sometimes people are too angry to talk it out or solve the problem. They may need to take a break and work on it later.

Skip It: Some conflicts are not worth bothering with. Just forget about it.

Get Help: Sometimes you can not come to a solution by yourselves, and you need to ask a grown-up or another child to help you.

Note: This chart was taken from Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children’s Literature by William J. Kriedler, pgs. 45-46.

Each time you go through sections of the chart with the class (maybe three or four at a time), talk to the class about how these suggestions will help move them down the Conflict Escalator. Generate a discussion about when a good time would be to use each suggestion.

After having talked about situations where ideas from the Conflict Resolution Chart would be appropriate, have the students draw a picture of one of the suggestions that was discussed for that day. Ask volunteers to get up and share their picture and talk about a situation where they think their way to de-escalate the conflict would work best.

Be sure to put students' work up in the classroom to help promote ways to de-escalate conflicts. These may help serve as a reminder to students all the options they have to try and work out a conflict without violence. Also, post the Conflict Resolution Chart in the classroom. Refer to the chart as often as classroom conflict happens. Encourage children if they have a conflict to go over to the chart and look for methods they can use to help them get off the Conflict Escalator. Also, the teacher can intervene and serve as a facilitator by asking which of the conflict resolution methods on the chart would they like to use.

Because you always want to reinforce conflict resolution, be sure to acknowledge students when they are able to work through a conflict peaceably. Encourage children to share with the rest of the class their conflict and how it was solved. Talking out loud and sharing with classmates helps reinforce the importance and success conflict resolution has on de-escalation. It also helps children learn how to use conflict resolution methods in real-life situations.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Four: Solving Problems

Objectives:

- ~ to introduce the ABCD Conflict Solving Process
- ~ to give students an opportunity to practice the ABCD Conflict Solving process

Materials:

- ~ marker for chart or white board
- ~ chart paper

Procedure:

Start by telling children that you want them to be responsible problem solvers. When conflict arises that creates a problem, and you want children to know the best way to go about being a problem solver. Write or have a pre-made chart that has ABCD. Explain to children that each of the four letters is a problem-solving step that will help them resolve the conflict reasonably. Let the children know that you expect each of them to use these as you work together this school year.

- 1) **A**sk, “What’s the problem?”
- 2) **B**rainstorm some solutions.
- 3) **C**hoose the best solution.
- 4) **D**o it.

Give children an example of a possible conflict that could or has previously happened in the classroom. For example: The children in Mr. VanNostern’s class have been waiting patiently for their new special markers. Once the markers arrived, Mr. VanNostern began taking the markers out of their packages. The children began calling “Hey, I want that one,” or “I want all the red ones.” All the children wanted to be the first to use the markers.

Here is where you can now implement the ABCD steps of trying to solve this problem.

As a whole group come up with solutions to each of the four steps. An ABCD solution may look like this:

- A) Everyone wants to use the markers first
- B) Set a timer, distribute by group, share, or put at a center
- C) Put at a center
- D) Set up a writing/drawing center in the classroom and make it available to all students during set times. Students know when to be at the center and know not to go past their certain time. This allows all students access to the markers during their given time and no one gets more time than another person or group.

After having gone through a couple different made up scenarios and checking to see if the kids are understanding the steps of ABCD method, go ahead and encourage the class to talk about a problem in the classroom that you could solve together. Have the class brainstorm a list of things that they see as being class problems. Next, pick one of the problems listed and brainstorm ideas on ways to best solve the problem. When the brainstorming is finished, discuss with the class which idea might be the best possible solution. Choose a solution to the problem and implement the solution. This will not only give the class a sense of being problem solvers but will model a positive example of how the ABCD method works successfully. Encourage the class to use this method throughout the year when problems arise in the classroom and at school.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Five: Understanding Other Perspectives

Materials:

- ~ point of view box
- ~ objects for the point of view box

Objective:

- ~ to introduce to students the concept that people have different points of view

Procedure:

Stand up in front of the class and without talking pantomime a simple activity such as washing dishes. Ask the class to try and guess what it is you are doing. Write their responses up on the board. Once you have a few responses go through the list and talk about how people have different ideas about what actions you were doing. Introduce to the class the concept of people see things differently. Emphasize how Jan thought you were dusting and Chris thought you were gardening and Blake thought you were folding clothes. Tell the class that what you were doing was washing dishes but their points of view were different.

Next, ask for a student to come up in front of the class and pantomime a simple action. Some examples may include: tying shoes, wrapping a gift, baking cookies, reading a story, riding in a car, or talking on the phone. Explain to the class that even though only one activity is being done it can look different to other people. Emphasize how we all see the world differently and that is what makes us unique and special. The way we see the world is our very own point of view. Tell children that we each have a point of view and it will not always agree with others just as it did not agree with the pantomime being done.

To reinforce this concept make a Point of View box by having a hole large enough so a student would be able put their hand through the hole. The box needs to be completely covered so that the person can not see what is inside the box. Inside the box place an object or two and have the child guess what they think it is. Do this with several kids and list their answers. This activity will help reinforce that we not only see things differently but we sense things differently.

Also explain that sometimes when people do not listen carefully and misunderstand someone else this can lead to conflict. Have everyone sit in a circle and without anyone else seeing, write down a short sentence. After the sentence has been written, whisper the sentence into the person's ear that is directly next to you. That person then whispers the message to the person next to them and it keeps on going around the circle until it comes back to you. The last person has to say the sentence out loud and then show the class what sentence you wrote down. Compare the written sentence to what was heard and then stated at the end of the circle. Discuss how misunderstandings can happen easily and lead to conflict.

The pantomiming, POV box, and the whisper game are all examples to help introduce to children and reinforce how people have different points of view. Conflict occurs because people have different points of view about a situation. Understanding others' points of view is an essential life skill and children need to understand that this is something we value in our culture. Because people have differences does not mean there needs to be conflict. Children need be aware of appreciation and recognize others' differences as being okay.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Six: Conflict and Feelings

Objectives:

- ~ to expand affective vocabulary
- ~ to be aware of what triggers feelings
- ~ to be encouraged to express feelings constructively
- ~ to identify the degree of intensity of ones feelings

Materials:

- ~ chart paper or white board
- ~ marker(s)
- ~ construction paper
- ~ individual pencils, crayons and markers
- ~ note cards with the following words on each:

happy	mad	sad	excited	jealous
angry	lonely	scared	worried	proud
surprised				

Procedure:

Have the above words written on note cards and show each card to the class. Talk about each word and how it is a feeling. Talk about how feelings can be affected by what others say and do. Go through each card and discuss with the class times where maybe the students have felt these particular feelings. Write each feeling on the chart paper and as a whole-group have the children pantomime how each feeling may look.

Next talk with the class about how our feelings occur because they were triggered by something. Read the following sentences and have volunteers identify appropriate feelings for

each trigger. As you go through each one, talk about the trigger and how it affects a person's feelings.

- ~ When someone pushes me, I feel _____ .
- ~ When I do a good job, I feel _____ .
- ~ When I help someone and they say thanks, I feel _____ .
- ~ When someone calls me a name, I feel _____ .
- ~ When someone will not share with me, I feel _____ .
- ~ When someone will share with me, I feel _____ .
- ~ When someone smiles at me, I feel _____ .
- ~ When I get a snack I did not expect, I feel _____ .

After going through all the different feelings caused by a trigger, allow students time to work on their own. Have each child take a piece of construction paper and fold it in half. Fold it in half again so there are four sections. In each section have each child write a feeling. Students need to illustrate that feeling and be ready to discuss with the rest of the class the trigger and why it makes them feel a particular way. Display the students' work around the classroom to remind all students that we need to respect others' feelings and remember specific triggers that can be hurtful.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Seven: Conflict and Feelings

Objectives:

- ~ to recognize anger-related words
- ~ to recognize the intensity of their feelings
- ~ to introduce children to a metaphor that will help control their anger

Materials:

- ~ thermometer
- ~ pre-made copy 4 mini thermometers worksheet
- ~ white construction paper
- ~ crayons and markers

Procedure:

Begin by showing the class a real thermometer and talk about what it does. Talk about how when air gets hotter the mercury inside the thermometer rises. Next draw or show an already-made thermometer with varying degrees of anger. Your picture should start with annoyed at the bottom, followed by irritated, angry, furious, and at the very top enraged. Explain to the class that when people get angry it is like they are getting hotter and their temperature begins to rise. You can use this thermometer to measure anger. Be sure to go through all five of the words on the thermometer with the class.

Discuss how different triggers can lead to different degrees of anger. Give some examples of how a person may feel annoyed about one thing and enraged about another. For example you could ask the class:

How would you feel if:

- ~ someone took something from you?
- ~ someone kept bothering you while you tried to read?
- ~ someone called you a mean name?
- ~ someone kept teasing you?
- ~ someone made you do something you did not want to do?
- ~ someone got you in trouble when it was not your fault?

Next have the class each draw their own thermometer and write the five temperatures along the mercury. Have yours posted as an example while the class makes their own. Have each student fill in the mercury with a red marker or crayon to where it is they would feel if something triggered them. Make sure they label what the trigger is on the paper. Have volunteers get up and share their thermometer with the rest of the class and talk about what their trigger was and why they marked the level of anger on their thermometer.

With the individual worksheet that has four anger thermometers, go through with the class and give them different scenarios. Talk about the trigger for each one and have the class label where their anger level would be. Talk openly together about how triggers can vary a person's anger level. On the worksheet made available to the class you could label the four thermometers as follows: 1) Someone takes your snack from your lunch box and eats it, 2) A girl on the bus says, "I will beat you up if you don't give me that seat!", 3) An older student says, "You babies can't play this game!", and 4) You want to jump rope but the other children won't let you play.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Eight: Appreciating Diversity

Objectives:

- ~ to encourage children to talk about differences
- ~ to acknowledge and appreciate others' differences
- ~ discuss how differences can be enriching but can also lead to conflict

Materials:

- ~ white paper
- ~ crayons, markers

Procedure:

Have children work in groups of two. What each group will be doing is interviewing the other person to try and find out more about the person. By doing this, each group will be able to come up with differences and similarities. Have each group make up a list of what they have in common and what they do not have in common. Once the list is complete, each set of partners needs to draw the other. Staple the two portraits to the list and have each group present to the rest of the class, showing what their differences and things in common are. Talk openly about how some of these differences may lead to conflict. Talk about how they might solve the conflict or how their differences could be helpful or useful. Be sure to display their work in the class. This will help remind the class that everyone is different, yet an important person and important part of the class.

An extension to showing kids ways to appreciate diversity would be to have the class stand up and segregate them by various attributes. For example you could say, "If you belong to the group that likes milk, move to the right side of the room. If you do not like milk move to the left side of the room." Next, ask the class questions about why it is best to be in the group on the

left side and not the right side and vice versa. Talk about the disadvantages and advantages. Talk about how might conflict occur and what would be some ways to solve the conflict.

Continue this activity now by using other characteristics that would put students into various groups. Some examples to use include: girls, not girls; tall, not tall; blue eyes, not blue eyes; short hair, not short hair; Catholic, not Catholic; Hispanic, not Hispanic; can tie shoes, can not tie shoes; can read, can not read; can speak more than one language, can not speak more than one language; and so on. The groups you name can be as controversial or non-controversial as you would like. Try to present a mix of choices though to help children recognize there are indeed real differences that can easily separate people, which could lead to conflict.

Talk about how the separation made them feel. Talk about how each group could have a possible conflict between them. Explain ways we can learn from each other by being different. Encourage the class to come up with possible solutions to resolving conflicts that may arise between groups. Relate this activity to real-life situations that are happening in our country and schools today.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Nine: Caring, Respect, and Community

Objective:

- ~ children are to understand the benefits of being in a caring classroom community
- ~ to develop caring as a positive value
- ~ to identify what caring behaviors are

Materials:

- ~ chart paper or white board
- ~ markers

Procedure:

Write the word caring on the board and circle the word. Next ask students to tell you what they think the word means. As you hear different ideas draw lines going out from the circled word to help create a web design. Explain to the class that they are going to be responsible to make their classroom a caring place.

Once the web is up, read through all the suggestions. Next make a T chart and label on the left side: What Caring Looks Like and label the right side: What Caring Sounds Like. Have the class come up with ideas for each side. Talk with the class about why caring is important and who in ones' family is caring. Ask them how that caring person makes them feel. Talk about why it is important that the class is caring to each other and what are some ways to show that they care. As you discuss what caring is, list what it looks like and sounds like on the T chart. Keep the T chart up in the classroom for a while and refer to it often.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Ten: Caring, Respect, and Community

Objective:

- ~ to identify ways children can and do help others
- ~ to reinforce that helping others is a positive thing

Materials:

- ~ scissors
- ~ pencils, dark colored marker
- ~ construction paper in various skin-tone colors

Procedure:

Begin by discussing the concept of helping others. What does it mean? What are some ways you help others? Why is it important to be helpful? How does it make you? Generate a class discussion about why helping is important. Ask children how they may help others at school, at home, at church, or in the community for example.

Next explain to the class that they are going to outline their hand with a pencil on a colored piece of construction paper that best matches their skin color. Once their hand is traced, have each student cut out the outline of their hand. Students need to write their name in the center of their hand using a dark colored marker. On each finger have the students write a way in which they help themselves, a friend, their school, their community, and someone in their family. Be sure to have each child share their work with the rest of the class. It is important for other children to recognize what people their age are doing to help others. Display the hands in the room for the entire year. Students will be reminded of the importance of being helpful.

Source: Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William J. Kriedler

Lesson Eleven: Key To My Feelings

Objectives:

- ~ to identify feelings
- ~ to understand ways to handle your feelings

Materials:

- ~ colored construction paper
- ~ chart paper
- ~ scissors
- ~ markers and/or crayons
- ~ pencil
- ~ key pattern (recommend tag board and more than one for student use)

Procedure:

Have a class discussion about feelings. Talk about different feelings someone may have when in conflict. Write the feelings on a piece of chart paper and generate a discussion about ways to best handle your feelings when in a conflict. Have a model of a key cutout on tag board. Explain to the class they are to trace the key on to colored construction paper. Next, have each student cut out a key. Then the student needs to write the title 'Key to my Feelings' across the top. Last, have each student write their best way to handle their feelings when they feel sad or mad or any other feeling the class talked about that was put up on chart paper.

As an extension you could have each student share their key with the rest of the class. This would reinforce that everyone has feelings and handles their feelings in different ways. By sharing ideas, students have the opportunity to generate a discussion regarding the importance of how we handle feelings, which could decide whether or not a student gets into an escalated

conflict. Also, you could punch a hole at the top of each key and place them on a big ring and place the keys up in the room. This would help remind the class about the activity they participated in and how everyone deals with feelings differently.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict-Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Twelve: Steamed Teapot

Objectives:

- ~ students understand anger is a natural feeling
- ~ students learn how to best handle their anger without hurting others

Materials:

- ~ pencils
- ~ crayons/markers
- ~ chart paper or white board
- ~ white construction paper

Procedure:

First talk to the class about what it means to be angry. Ask the class to give examples of things that may make them angry. You can write responses down if you like. Ask the class to describe how they feel when they are angry. Talk about some actions that are not okay to do when a person gets angry. Ask students if they have ever been so angry that they got really hot and felt as if they were “steaming.” Talk to the class about how when they get to this point it is important that they stop and cool down before they “blow their top.” (You can use a teapot as an example)

Next allow the class enough time to design their own teapot. You may wish to have a pattern already for the class to trace or you can have a blackline master already ran off or depending on age appropriateness you could allow the class to draw their own teapot using white construction paper. Encourage designs and coloring. In the center of the teapot have each student write about a time they were so angry they felt as if they were “steaming.” Have them describe how they felt and what they wanted to do but what they did instead to deal with their

anger without hurting the other person. Or you could have the student write about how they dealt with their anger even if it was inappropriate but what they would do differently the next time they become so angry it feels like they are about to blow their top. You could have each person share their work with the rest of the class and have the class talk openly about if the way each child chose to deal with their anger was a good one or not.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Thirteen: Smart Signals

Objectives:

- ~ to remind students to cool down their behavior once they get angry
- ~ to associate anger with red and stop
- ~ introduce a traffic signal strategy to help reduce conflict

Materials:

- ~ markers/crayons (red, yellow, green and black)
- ~ white board or chart paper
- ~ white construction paper
- ~ pencils

Procedure:

Talk to students about anger. Tell students that sometimes when a person gets angry their body heats up and their face gets red. Tell the class that when this happens this is their signal to stop! Introduce a stoplight (teacher may want to either draw on the white board or chart paper for students) and review the three colors and what they mean to drivers. When someone is so angry they are “seeing red” they need to “stop” and cool down. Tell the class that when dealing with anger, yellow means “to proceed with caution.” This is where a student would want to find the best solution and solve the conflict so that anger is eliminated. Green means “go!” Once the student has found the best solution to solve the conflict, then this is when they need to move ahead and follow through so that all involved can feel good without any harm or hurtful feelings.

Give the class some scenarios before they get to work on their own traffic signals of what color would best fit the scenario. For example you may want to have the class try and guess which signal would best fit the following examples:

1. “ I wish you didn’t sit next to me during lunch! You are such a slob and always have food all over your mouth and hands! You are gross!”
2. “ I’ll make you sorry you ever said that about my brother!”
3. “ I was really angry at you until you explained to me about why my book was wet.”
4. “Thanks for talking me through what happened to my favorite pencil. It really helps to hear the truth.”

After the class is comfortable with using the “stop”, “proceed with caution,” and “go” signals, allow them time to work on creating their own traffic light using appropriate colors. Have yours up as an example. Underneath each colored light, have the student write about how they feel and how they would solve their conflict. Display these up in the room so children can be reminded of the traffic signal strategy to solving conflicts. Or, you may want to display these in the hall so other students in the building can see good examples of how your classroom solves their conflicts without hurting others.

Lesson Fourteen: I'm a Hit at Managing My Anger!

Objectives:

- ~ to become aware of anger
- ~ to learn how to handle feelings when one becomes angry

Materials:

- ~ round circle pattern
- ~ white and light brown construction paper
- ~ baseball bat pattern
- ~ pencils, red marker
- ~ glue
- ~ scissors
- ~ 12x18 inch assorted colored construction paper

Procedure:

Talk with the class about how it is natural to become angry with someone. Stress the importance that we need to be in control of our anger and manage our anger so we do not end up hurting others. Prompt discussion by asking the class how their body feels when it is angry? How do they act when they are angry? Who is in charge of their anger?

Point out to students that physical violence is not an acceptable form of managing anger. Even though they may feel like hitting someone or something, there are other ways to deal with anger peacefully. Explain to the class that all year they are going to work on managing anger so conflict does not escalate. Give the class some examples of ways they should and should not

manage anger. Talk about why each solution is either good or bad. Some examples to consider include: 1) I will hit the person or something I am mad at, 2) I will shout and yell at that person, 3) I will first calm down, 4) I will think about why I am angry, 5) I will not hit or shout even if I really feel like it, 6) I will throw something to help ease my anger, 7) I will sit down and count to ten, 8) I will make mean faces and that's okay because I am not yelling or shouting, 9) I will control my anger by pouting.

Have the class trace a round circle onto white paper. Have them make broken lines to resemble a baseball. For the lines they may use red marker or crayon. Inside the baseball have each student write one or more than one way they will control their anger. On a sheet of brown paper have each student trace an already made pattern of a baseball bat. Inside the bat have each student write, "I'm a hit at controlling my anger!" Both baseball and bat will need to be cut out and glued onto a colored sheet of construction paper so they may be easily read by others.

Display these in the classroom or on a hallway bulletin board to help remind the class and other students about the importance of controlling anger. Also, you may want each student to share with the rest of the class ways they plan to be 'a hit' with others because they are in control of their anger.

Lesson Fifteen: Shake My Anger

Objective:

- ~ to get students to learn to 'shake off' their anger
- ~ to have students learn ways to face their anger and find a peaceable solution to resolve their anger

Materials:

- ~ two straws per student
- ~ medium sized paper cups (try to get these donated from any fast food establishment)
- ~ colored construction paper (light colors work best)
- ~ pencils and markers

Procedure:

Show the class a finished product of a shake you have already made. Talk to the class about how anger is a natural feeling and when students start to feel angry they need to recognize their feelings and know the best ways to manage their anger. Talk to the class about the term, 'shake it off'. Explain to the class that when someone tells them to 'shake it off' they want them to forget about it and not get all worked up over something that will lead to a conflict. This will help kids see why they will be making a milkshake.

Show the class your already-made milkshake and share with the class what you have put on your milkshake. Share how you act when you get angry and how you feel right away or later once your anger subsides. Share what you would change the next time you get angry. Explain to the class how it is important to recognize how they deal with anger and ways they could do a better job at dealing with their anger next time. Draw a class discussion on appropriate ways to deal with anger. Talk about why it is important we learn to handle our anger peaceably so that

we do not hurt our selves or others. Next, give students a chance to make their own milkshake and write about how they can best ‘shake off’ their anger next time someone makes them angry.

First have students take a colored sheet of construction paper and wrap it around a cup. Students will need to cut off the excess amount of paper. Students can tape, staple or glue the paper so that it forms completely around the cup. Have students write in black marker their name at the top. Next have students write about how they want to ‘shake off’ how they act when they get angry. And then have students write what they are going to change the next time they feel angry.

To complete their milkshake add two straws to the cup and display in the classroom. Encourage students to share their milkshake with the rest of the class and talk openly about why they feel they should ‘shake off’ the anger they feel right away and instead think of a better way to help alleviate their anger. Have the class agree or disagree with other students’ responses and encourage thoughts on ways to help alleviate anger.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Sixteen: We're Hot Stuff at Cooling Down

Objective:

- ~ learn ways to cool down
- ~ understand the benefits of cooling down

Materials:

- ~ red construction paper
- ~ outline of a chili pepper
- ~ scissors
- ~ pencils or pens
- ~ hole punch
- ~ string

Procedure:

Talk to the class about appropriate ways to cool down when angry. Brainstorm ideas on chart paper. After a good brainstorming session, pick ideas the class thinks are the best ways to cool down when angry. Star the ideas the class likes best. Draw a discussion with the class about why these are good ways to handle anger. Talk about the benefits of cooling down when one becomes angry. Talk about the consequences of what happens when one does not cool down first before dealing with their anger. Some appropriate ways to handle anger by cooling down may include counting to twenty, walking away from the problem, going to a quiet area alone, writing your thoughts, drawing, listening to music, exercising, or doing a hobby to give you some time to cool down first.

Once the class has shown an understanding of why it is important to allow a cool down period when they are angry have them trace chili peppers onto red construction paper. Students

need to cut out the chili peppers and write ways they will cool down the next time they get angry. Punch holes at the top and string each chili pepper through so that it can be worn as a necklace or they can be hung in the classroom to help remind and promote a cooling down period when becoming angry and hot like a chili pepper.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Seventeen: Potattle Chips

Objective:

- ~ to get students to solve problems instead of tattling on others
- ~ to understand the difference between a tattle and a safety issue such as bullying or physical violence

Materials:

- ~ blackline master of a potato chip bag with the title 'Potattle Chips' inside surrounded by outlines of potato chips.
- ~ pencils
- ~ chart paper
- ~ marker
- ~ individual small bags of potato chips (optional)

Procedure:

Begin by having a class discussion about children who repeatedly tell on others. Express the importance of each child becoming their own problem solver. Talk to the class about what they think a tattle-taler is. List their preconceived ideas on chart paper. Define with the class that a 'tattle-taler' is someone who tells on others repeatedly for very small incidents that could have been solved without having to tell an adult near by. Let the class know that a good way to tell if someone is a 'tattle-taler' is if they repeatedly seek adult help for incidents they could have solved themselves if they had problem solving skills.

Discuss with the class appropriate times when it is a smart choice to tell an adult about certain situations. Make it very clear to the class that any incident involving bullying, weapons, physical violence or anything else involving the safety of others should be reported to an adult

and is not considered tattling. To make sure the class knows the difference between the two, give the class some scenarios that involve tattling and not tattling. Some examples may include:

1. Telling on someone who is bothering you
2. Telling on someone who will not share
3. Telling on someone who has cigarettes
4. Telling on someone who is not following directions
5. Telling on someone who is running in the hall
6. Telling on someone who is looking at your work
7. Telling on someone who brought a knife to school
8. Telling on someone who teases you
9. Telling on someone who threatens to hurt you
10. Telling on someone who hit you

Once you feel the class understands the importance of being a problem solver and not a tattler, have each student fill out a 'potattle chip' sheet about ways they can solve their own problems without tattling. For added fun during this activity, allow each student to enjoy their very own small bag of potato chips while working on their 'potattle chip' sheet. You can encourage students to share their work with others, or role play ways to solve problems without tattling to an adult.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Children by Beth Teolis

Lesson Eighteen: Pick a Pasta

Objectives:

- ~ to understand that people have different viewpoints, opinions and tastes in life
- ~ to recognize the importance of acknowledging others' viewpoints

Materials:

- ~ chart paper
- ~ markers
- ~ different pastas (spaghetti, macaroni, lasagna, penne, fettuccini)
- ~ writing paper
- ~ pencils

Procedure:

Tell the class you are going to take a vote on the class' favorite pasta. Ask some of the students to share what their favorite pastas are. You may want to show some dried pasta to help remind students of some pastas they may enjoy. After some responses have been generated, list the three main pastas that the kids shared they liked best. Tally up the number of votes for each pasta.

Next, have each student write a short paragraph about why they like their pasta the best and what makes it better than the others. Have some students share their opinions. This will direct the class to begin a discussion about differences people have and how each person feels strongly about their pasta being the better pasta. You can relate the differences in pasta with the differences people have about everything around them.

Talk with the class about the importance of being a good listener when someone else has something that is important or greatly liked. Even though it might not be something you feel is

important or liked very much, discuss how differences in opinion are good and need to be appreciated and respected. For example, you may want to bring preferences up such as music, colors, sports, television programs and the like. Students will be able to relate more with the concept that yes, everyone does have an opinion and a lot of the time it may differ from theirs and that is okay.

Students need to be taught that differences in opinion are important and need to be heard. Once students begin to realize there are many differences in opinion, they will then be able to look at a problem from someone else's viewpoint. This is an important problem solving technique that will help students when trying to solve a conflict.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Nineteen: Let's Take a Look

Objective:

- ~ to understand the importance of someone else's feelings
- ~ to listen and work out a conflict so both are happy

Materials:

- ~ colored markers
- ~ silver foil
- ~ mirror patterns
- ~ wipe off pens
- ~ scissors
- ~ construction paper
- ~ sequins (optional)
- ~ glue
- ~ lamination required

Procedure:

Begin this lesson by asking students what they see when they look into a mirror. Talk about how when they see themselves it is called their reflection. Write the word 'reflection' really big on chart paper. Tell the class this is an important word because it will help them be better problem solvers. Discuss how when they look into a mirror their reflection is the image they see coming back to them. Talk about the importance of seeing others' viewpoints. A good way to do this is by putting them self in the other person's shoes and looking at that person's feelings.

Tell the class they are going to make mirrors and these mirrors will help serve as a 'looking glass' into the other person's feelings when there becomes a conflict. By looking into the mirror and seeing the other person's reflection of feelings will help students understand how the other person is feeling. By allowing each person involved to write the person they are in conflict with feelings on the mirror will help reinforce that other people's feelings are important too and should be heard and recognized so that a mutual agreement can be made. This activity allows students to work through their conflict before it begins to escalate.

For an example, show the class an enlarged already-made mirror and display it in the classroom. Inside the mirror have some basic rules posted such as: 1) In a conflict, first we listen to the other person, 2) Next, we write what the other person is feeling and wants to happen, 3) We then share the mirror writings with each other, 4) We solve the problem so we both are happy and there is no conflict. To help students get a full understanding of why they are making a mirror and the importance it serves, have a student role play with you the appropriate way to use their mirrors.

Once students understand what their mirrors are used for and the correct way to use them, have students begin making their own mirror. Students are to trace the mirror pattern on construction paper and then cut it out, making sure there is a round hole inside large enough for writing. Next, students need to place foil very neatly around the mirror. You will need to really help each student with this part as they will need to be flat because they will be going through the laminator. Once laminated, students can glue on sequins or other décor for aesthetic pleasure. Have a place where wipe off pens are handy so that when students need to write someone else's feelings they have access to the pens.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Twenty: Pizza with Pizazz

Objective:

- ~ students will learn communication skills when dealing with a conflict

Materials:

- ~ donated pizza box for each student
- ~ light brown construction paper
- ~ various colored construction paper scraps for toppings
- ~ patterned circle cut out
- ~ red crayons
- ~ scissors

Procedure:

Begin the activity by making a 'T' chart on the board. On one side have 'phrases we like' and on the other side have 'phrases we do not like'. Brainstorm phrases students like to hear from others when they are in a conflict. Next brainstorm phrases students may be quick to say but are not good phrases to use. Talk about why certain phrases are good and others listed are not.

Tell the class they are going to make a pizza and on each slice they need to write a good phrase they would use when trying to solve a conflict. Students may copy the good phrases from the chart. Some good phrases students would like to hear may include: 1) "I want to solve this with you", 2) "I hear you telling me . . .", 3) "Let's try to work this out by . . .", 4) "Nobody will get hurt if we . . .", 5) "Let's think of some ways . . .", 6) "I'm tuning in to hear your side . . .", 7) "When you yell I feel upset . . ."

In order for students to make their pizza, they first need to trace a large circle on light brown paper. Next they need to cut it out and divide it evenly into pieces like a pizza using a marker. Students can then color the entire pizza with a red crayon, leaving the outside of the circle brown to represent the crust. On each slice students need to have one large pizza topping such as pepperoni, Canadian bacon, pineapple, green pepper, mushrooms or onions. Students can use colored construction paper scraps to make their toppings. On each topping, students are to write a phrase they plan to use the next time they need to be a peaceable problem solver. Glue each topping onto each slice of pizza.

Once their pizza is complete they may put it inside their pizza box and decorate the box if they wish. As a wrap up to this activity have the class share their pizza phrases with the rest of the class. Also, it may be fun to have the class eat real pizza after they have worked on making their own paper ones with positive problem solving skills. Display the pizzas in their box with the lids up throughout the classroom or a school showcase.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Twenty-one: Twisted Times

Objective:

- ~ to recognize the importance of being a good listener

Materials:

- ~ pre-made sentence strips
- ~ outline of a pretzel copied on brown construction paper
- ~ scissors
- ~ pencils
- ~ white crayons
- ~ small twisted pretzels for snack (optional)

Procedure:

Ask your students if they have ever been in a situation where they were misunderstood and someone else was thinking something completely different from what they were saying. Talk to the class about how this can easily happen when someone is not listening. Tell the class if they are not good listeners then they may be causing a conflict with someone else because they did not hear what the other person is saying.

As an example, have each student turn to another student and begin talking out loud. Once all students are talking, tell the class something very important. Raise your voice and say, "Stop!" Next, ask the class to repeat what you said. Chances are most of the class will not have heard you because they were not fully listening. Talk with the class about how things can become "twisted" if they are not using good listening skills. Explain to the class that it is very easy for a conflict to escalate if you are not being a polite listener. When there is good listening, people can understand what the other is saying or feeling. When there is bad listening, it is much

more difficult to solve the problem because either person may not understand what the other is saying.

Have the class form one big circle, including yourself. Tell the class you are going to whisper a sentence from a sentence strip into the person's ear that is directly next to you. They will then whisper the exact thing you said to the person next to them and it will go all the way around the circle until it gets back to you. The last person needs to say out loud what was whispered to them. If good listening was used, they should have said the exact words you started with. Hold up your sentence and compare what was said out loud to what you read on the paper. You can repeat this activity as many times as you wish using different sentence strips. This is a fun activity that gets many giggles but shows the class why listening is very important. Students will see how stories can become "twisted."

Give each student a copy of the pretzel and tell them to write about a time their words became twisted because someone else was not a good listener. Students can cut out the pretzel shape. They can use white crayon as salt dots if they like. While students are writing you may want to hand out twisted shaped pretzels for the class to snack on while they work. Have a sharing time where students read out loud what they wrote on their pretzels about a time their story got twisted.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Twenty-two: A Rainbow of Peace

Objective:

- ~ to help students understand why peace is important
- ~ to make students aware of having peace in themselves

Materials:

- ~ colored markers
- ~ white construction paper

Procedure:

Begin by brainstorming feelings students get when they see a rainbow. Talk with the class about how many people think rainbows are peaceful and pretty. Talk with the class about how they need to have peace within themselves so that they can share their peace with others around them. Draw a rainbow on the whiteboard making sure you use three thick bands. At the end of the rainbow draw a large pot of gold. Inside the first band write one thing you do to make peace inside yourself. In the middle band, write one thing you do to make peace towards others and in the third band write one thing you do to make peace in the world. Go through each band with the class and talk about appropriate ways to make peace in your self, with others, and for the world. Call on some students to give some of their examples for making peace.

Next, in the pot of gold write about how you handled a conflict with someone else that ended up with both of you feeling peaceful with each other. Share with the class the importance of solving problems peacefully so others do not get hurt. Talk about how at the end of the rainbow this pot of gold represents a tremendous gift. Relate solving problems together peacefully as being a tremendous gift to have. Encourage students to hold tight onto the gift of being a peaceable problem solver.

Once students have seen your example of the three-banded rainbow, allow the class time to make their own rainbows with pots of gold. Have the students color each band and then write using a black marker what they do to make peace within themselves, peace towards others, and peace in the world. Have the class outline the pot in black marker, but do not color inside the pot. Inside the pot using black marker have the students write how they handled a conflict where both involved left feeling peaceful. After the class has completed their rainbows, ask for some volunteers to share their peace comments. Display everyone's work so students can be reminded the importance of having peace for themselves and for others.

Source: Ready-to Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Lesson Twenty-three: Mediation Means Magnificent!

Objective:

- ~ to get students to use a peer as a mediator to help resolve conflicts
- ~ to show students how to be a peer mediator

Materials:

- ~ teacher made copies of a peer mediator log
- ~ teacher made copies of a conflict solver contract

Procedure:

Talk with the class about how sometimes it helps to have someone else other than a grown up help solve a conflict if it can not be solved between the two people. Invite the class to take on the responsibility of being a peer mediator. Tell the class about how a peer mediator is a third person brought into the conflict to help the other two people solve their conflict peacefully. Be sure to stress that the peer mediator's job is to listen and get all the facts. They are to meet either individually or with all involved and help each person come up with a solution to the problem so both people in conflict can walk away feeling good about the solution.

After the mediation is finished, have both the mediator and the two involved in the conflict fill out forms and keep them either in a journal or hand them in to the teacher for comments. The people in conflict need to fill out a form that will evaluate how they did with a peer mediator. The peer mediator will fill out a form that will evaluate how they did with mediating the conflict. Have a place where these forms are kept in the classroom and students know right where to go once a mediation session is successfully finished.

An example of a peer mediator log should include questions for the mediator to fill out such as:

- 1) Did both persons having the conflict agree to work on a solution they would both feel good about?
- 2) The conflict was about . . . ?
- 3) Possible solutions were . . .
- 4) The solution chosen was . . .
- 5) How did each person feel about the solution?
- 6) Did I judge either of them?
- 7) The hard part for me was . . .
- 8) Next time I mediate I will . . .
- 9) Here is how I feel about this mediation . . .

An example of a log for those who had the conflict includes:

- 1) Our conflict was about . . .
- 2) Here is how I felt about working it out . . .
- 3) Some of the solutions we brainstormed were . . .
- 4) The solution we agreed most fair for both of us was . . .
- 5) Did either of us end up feeling like a loser? Why or why not?
- 6) How did the mediator help each one of us?
- 7) Did we plan to get together to follow up? Is so, when and where?
- 8) Here is how I feel about solving a conflict with a peer mediator . . .

Role-play a conflict between two people. Have the two people not be able to come to an agreement. As the teacher, model being a peer mediator so the class can see exactly what the job of a peer mediator means and why it is important. Model for the class the importance of listening to each person as they tell their points of view. Ask each person what they would like

to see happen next. Brainstorm solutions. Pick a solution that is fair for both. Ask if they agree on the solution you chose for them. If not, keep trying until both feel like winners. Once they agree on a solution that is good for both of them, congratulate them and yourself for being peaceable problem solvers through mediation. Then show the class the logs they are expected to fill out after every mediation session. Tell the class it is important for all involved to reflect on the conflict and how it was solved. These logs help students turn their conflict into an accomplishment.

Source: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Elementary Students by Beth Teolis

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

A key component to getting today's youth to solve their conflicts without hurting or harming others is to get a head start on helping children acquire skills needed to solve conflicts peaceably. Teachers need to start motivating children at an early age to want to solve their conflicts without hurt or harm to others. Keeping a peaceable classroom comes from students being educated on ways to solve their conflicts non-violently. A peaceable classroom will nurture and provide pro-social behavior to students, which will then lead to a more peaceful world.

Students who are exposed to conflict resolution can be peaceable problem solvers. This project was developed to help teachers increase social skills in children by providing various conflict resolution techniques. Also, this project was developed to serve as a resource tool for teachers who need ideas or guidance on how to best facilitate and promote conflict resolution in the classroom. This project is intended to motivate teachers to want to advocate for their schools a conflict resolution curriculum so that their classroom and everyone's future will reap the benefits. We can make a difference, but today's youth needs the guidance and exposure of pro-social behavior.

Conclusion

There is no one right way to handle all conflicts. Different conflict resolution approaches are appropriate for different situations. The lessons and activities provided in this project were intended to help children recognize various options in conflict situations and to think critically about the best possible solution to the conflict.

The lessons were intended to encourage children to be problem solvers on their own and to choose appropriate options that are nonviolent. These lessons point out the needs of people who are involved in the conflict and help to improve relationships. These lessons promote unity within the classroom. Feelings of self-worth and intrinsic motivation come from students who want to find solutions to their conflict without hurting others involved. The lessons provide many opportunities for children to make their own choices and to work through different conflicts where everyone involved can feel good.

The strategy in making these lessons successful stems from the commitment of the teacher to reinforce and actively encourage children to use various conflict resolution strategies. In order to get to a solution that everyone involved can be happy with students need to know they have control of the situation. They need to be the ones who want to solve the conflict so that everyone involved can walk away feeling satisfied.

These lessons can only be successful if the teacher using them believes in conflict resolution and believes that by giving children the knowledge and the how to of solving conflicts without violence will make a difference in children's lives. Teachers who advocate for peaceable classrooms will encourage children to feel comfortable about being peaceable problem solvers.

Recommendations

The author believes that the success of a peaceable classroom comes from the commitment of the teacher. The author recommends the teacher consistently reinforce and manage students so when a student recognizes a potential conflict they will know what to do to resolve the conflict without violence. In order to get to this step, the author

recommends teachers provide students with an array of ideas on ways to be in control of solving their own conflicts without harming others. Furthermore, specific communication skills can be nurtured in students to assist in addressing potential conflict situations.

The author recommends for the teacher to introduce conflict resolution skills and concepts early in the school year so the class has many months of experience handling conflict as it arises allowing for many 'teachable moments' on the teacher's part. The author believes in order for violence to decrease in middle and high school, children at the elementary level need to be taught peaceable problem solving strategies. The author advocates we do this so while children get older they will have had the exposure and knowledge on the importance of not hurting others. In turn, their knowledge on conflict resolution will set the precedent for others and only then will we begin to see a change in violence among today's youth.

The author also recommends keeping conflict resolution skills as on-going lessons throughout the school year. Often times when a unit on a particular subject is taught, it gets covered and then never re-visited. The author feels that once a skill or concept is taught, it needs to be reinforced and modeled over and over again.

The author recommends specific definitions and words be taught regarding conflict resolution. Teachers need to encourage students to speak these words whenever necessary. The author feels young learners need to hear these words and become comfortable with saying them. Children need to understand when to use them and why. The more knowledge one can give a student regarding peaceable problem skills, the more

the student will not only speak the words, but will initiate the problem solving action when necessary.

The author recommends for the teacher to be aware of their importance when handling conflict. The way to handle conflict peaceably with a student or students will reinforce the importance and model best solutions for students to try. Also, the author recommends the teacher remember the importance of body language and expression. The teacher needs to be in control of voice and other forms of expression so that they do not come across as threatening to students.

The author has implemented many of the conflict resolution activities with her first grade students. Because the author emphasizes certain strategies constantly such as the conflict escalator or the ABCD approach to problem solving, her students have not only been given opportunities to be problem solvers but have acted on those opportunities and have come away with a win-win solution. Also, the author has used many of the visuals recommended and keeps them up as teaching tools whenever necessary. Their purpose has served many by reminding students about common conflict resolution techniques.

Because the author has worked with her class on solving conflict peaceably, the author has noticed her students being able to solve problems without her assistance. This alleviates classroom interruptions and does not take as much teaching time away from the teacher. The author was more aware of how the name calling, tattling, and body language of her students was reduced because of conflict resolution skills being taught. Also noticeable were the lesser amounts of bullying outside during recess time.

This project attempts to enlighten teachers, administrators and the public eye on the importance of schools implementing conflict resolution as part of the standard school curriculum. Teaching our young learners about ways to solve conflict without hurting others is crucial if we want to see a change in the prevalence of violence in schools. This project attempts to contribute to strategies the teacher has which help provide opportunities for children to resolve conflicts peaceably. Peaceable classrooms have evolved and will continue to evolve as students and teachers keep the commitment of using conflict resolution in daily classroom life.

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